

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MAY 15, 1896.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. GEAR, from the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany S. 1961.]

The Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, to whom was referred the bill (S. 1961) to authorize the purchase of the property known as the Corcoran Art Gallery, in the city of Washington, District of Columbia, beg leave to report the bill back to the Senate with the recommendation that it do pass.

The property referred to in the bill is situated at the corner of Seventeenth street and Pennsylvania avenue NW., with frontage of 106 feet on Pennsylvania avenue and 160 feet on Seventeenth street, and contains 17,736 square feet. The building on this property is of a most substantial and commodious character. The outside walls of the basement are 38 inches in thickness, the first story 32, and the second story 27 inches. The inside partition walls vary from 26 to 13 inches. The area of the floor space is 30,224 square feet, and the cubic contents of the building 639,528 cubic feet. With the exception of the roof, the entire building is fireproof, and the first and second floors are constructed with iron beams and brick arches and are capable of carrying a safe weight of 125 pounds per superficial foot at the greatest span.

This property, situated just across Pennsylvania avenue from the western extremity of the White House Grounds and immediately opposite the three great Departments of State, War, and Navy, and only one square from the Department of Justice and from the Treasury Department, is thus most easily accessible to five of the most important of the great Departments of the Government, as well as to the Executive Mansion, and is for this reason admirably located for use by the Government as a hall of records, or for any of the Bureaus or Commissions of the Government that are now occupying quarters rented from private parties.

The building could also be used with great advantage and propriety by the various commissions that so frequently hold their sittings in this city for the adjudication of international disputes and other questions of great moment to the country. The Government is now paying rent for quarters for the Interstate Commerce Commission, for the Geological Survey, and for various Bureaus of the Treasury Department, Interior Department, War Department, Navy Department, and Post-Office Department. The total annually paid by the Government for rent exceeds \$180,000, and the rate varies from 23 cents to 72 cents per square foot. The price at which this property is offered, if capitalized at 3 per cent, would make an outlay for this building of 34 cents per

square foot per annum. The Secretary of War, in his Annual Report for 1895, speaking of the State, War, and Navy building, says:

It is already unequal to the present demands, and several Bureaus of this Department have been forced to rent outside quarters because of the rapid accumulation of records and papers.

The price at which this property can now be purchased is quite advantageous to the Government, and delay in the matter might necessitate a larger investment at a later period.

Estimates of its value by four reliable real-estate firms of this city were furnished the committee, and are appended hereto as a part of this report, which show that the price asked for the entire property exceeds in amount very little, if any, the real value of the land alone, leaving out entirely the value of the large substantial building, which, it is understood, cost originally \$225,000, and which if owned by the Government would be of immediate and valuable service.

The Corcoran Gallery of Art with the free art school annexed thereto, in which more than 1,800 students have been educated without expense to them, is a public institution open to all the people, and stands in effect as a national gallery at the country's capital, with expanding growth, demanding the magnificent new structure now approaching completion, at Seventeenth street and New York avenue, which is among the largest and finest art galleries in the world. While the purchase by the Government of the present gallery building and property is fully justified for public uses, the fund derived therefrom is to be expended upon the maintenance of the new gallery, where, with larger schools of painting, sculpture and lecture halls, the entire people will receive entertainment and education in the fine arts, and the investment of the United States in the acquisition of this desirable property for public uses will be thus returned again to the public in the beneficent use to which it will be applied.

In the opinion of the committee the Government should own buildings proper and necessary for the different Departments of the public service, and it is confidently believed that this property, so admirably suited to the public needs, is a very advantageous acquirement, whether price, desirability of location, or easy and inexpensive adaptability for public uses be considered or not.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 6, 1896.

DEAR SIR: Answering your inquiry, we would say that in our opinion lots 5, 6, 7, and 8, square 167, belonging to the Corcoran Gallery of Art, containing 17,733 square feet of land, and situated in the northeast corner of Pennsylvania avenue and Seventeenth street, are fully worth \$20 per square foot, or \$354,660, exclusive of the improvements.

The buildings upon these lots are substantial, and even at this day handsome ones, which we understand cost upward of \$200,000 to originally erect. Their value to a prospective purchaser would, however, depend entirely upon whether they could be advantageously used, and could therefore not be estimated by us.

In connection with our valuation of this property, it may be of interest for you to know that we are holding for sale the corner of Pennsylvania avenue and Jackson place—same square—at about \$27 per square foot.

Very truly, yours,

THOS. J. FISHER & CO.

S. H. KAUFFMANN, Esq.,
President Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.

MARCH 6, 1896.

DEAR SIR: In reply to your inquiry in relation to the value of the land upon which the Corcoran Art Gallery is built, I will say that it is on lots 5, 6, 7, and 8, square 167, in this city, and I consider \$380,000 a fair price for it, independent of the building.

Very truly, yours,

R. O. HOLTZMAN.

Mr. S. H. KAUFFMANN,
Washington, D. C.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *March 26, 1896.*

DEAR SIR: In answer to the question what, in my opinion, would be a fair price for the Government to pay for the present Corcoran Gallery property, to be used for public purposes, I beg to say that I would regard \$375,000 as a conservative valuation.

Very truly, yours,

MYRON M. PARKER.

S. H. KAUFFMANN, Esq., *City.*WASHINGTON, D. C., *March 17, 1896.*

MY DEAR SIR: In reply to your inquiry of this date, as to the value of the Corcoran Art Gallery property, corner of Seventeenth street and Pennsylvania avenue, I have to say that I regard the property as worth for public purposes anywhere between \$400,000 and \$500,000. It is, as is well known, a building of special character and adapted only for the purposes for which it is now used or for the use of the Government. I understand you contemplate the sale of the property to the United States, and certainly there would be very little hesitation in the minds of any Senator or Representative in voting for the purchase of this property, the proceeds of same to be used for the benefit of the public—not for the people of Washington, but more largely for visitors from all parts of the Union.

I will be glad to furnish any further information you may desire.

Sincerely, yours,

B. H. WARNER.

S. H. KAUFFMANN, Esq.

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